

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicant would like to thank the Examiner for the careful consideration given the present application. The application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action, and amended as necessary to more clearly and particularly describe the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention.

Claims 3 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. Claims 3 and 7 have been amended to replace the term “tape-like” with the term “tape” as suggested by the Examiner.

Claims 3 and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Hikita (U.S. Patent 6,404,181). For at least the following reasons, the Examiner’s rejection is respectfully traversed.

Hikita does not disclose or teach “the first connecting portion of the second tape member and the second connecting portion of the first tape member are formed by coupling a locking member attachment and a locked member attachment respectively at the end portions of the tape members” as recited in claim 3. The Office Action refers to the component storage units 2 that are connected together (i.e., tape-shaped component cluster 1) as an electronic part supplying tape, the engagement projection 12 of a storage unit 2 as a first connecting portion, and the coupling hole 14 of another storage unit 2 as a second connecting portion (Office Action 07/06/2005, page 2–3).

Hikita discloses component storage units 2 that are connected together to form a tape-shaped component cluster 1 (col. 5, lines 46–56; Fig. 3). In Hikita, a pair of coupling elements 13 with engagement projections 12 project from one edge of the component storage unit 2, and a pair of projecting parts 15 with coupling holes 14 are provided at the other edge of the component storage unit 2 (see Figs. 1–2). The Hikita engagement projections 12 are fitted in the

corresponding coupling holes 14 and a positioning pin 16 is fitted into a corresponding positioning hole 17 in order to connect the component storage units 2 together to form a component cluster 1 (see Fig. 3).

Although the Hikita component storage units 2 can be connected together to form a tape-shaped component cluster 1, the storage units and the component clusters are not tape or tape members. In fact, Hikita specifically discloses that component clusters replace the conventional tape or tape member (col. 1, lines 13–57; Figs 10A). Therefore, Hikita does not disclose a first tape member or a second tape member. Thus, Hikita does not disclose or teach all the elements of the claimed invention.

The Office Action also does not refer to which items if any are the locking member attachment that is coupled to the end portion of the component cluster and the locked member attachment that is coupled to the end portion of the other component cluster. Thus, Hikita does not disclose or teach all the elements of the claimed invention.

Claims 3 and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hikita in view of Busler (U.S. Patent No. 3,431,548). For at least the following reasons, the Examiner's rejection is respectfully traversed.

None of the references disclose or suggest “the first connecting portion of the second tape member and the second connecting portion of the first tape member are formed by coupling a locking member attachment and a locked member attachment respectively at the end portions of the tape members” as recited in claim 3.

As mentioned previously, the Hikita component storage units 2 can be connected together to form a tape-shaped component cluster 1, however, the storage units and the component clusters are not tape or tape members. Hikita specifically discloses that component clusters

replace the conventional tape or tape member (col. 1, lines 13–57; Figs 10A). Therefore, Hikita does not disclose or suggest a first tape member or a second tape member. The Office Action also does not refer to which items if any are the locking member attachment that is coupled to the end portion of the component cluster and the locked member attachment that is coupled to the end portion of the other component cluster. Thus, Hikita does not disclose or suggestion all the elements of the claimed invention.

Busler does not overcome the deficiencies of the Hikita patent. Busler discloses a carrier strip for carrying elements (col. 2, lines 25–30). However, Busler does not disclose or suggest that the carrier strip is a carrier tape or tape member. Therefore, Busler fails to disclose or suggest a first tape member or a second tape member. Although Busler discloses that one end of the carrier strip 41 has a snap member 42 and the other end of the carrier strip includes a receptacle 44 (col. 2, lines 30–32), Busler does not disclose or suggest that the snap member 42 and the receptacle 44 are coupled to the end portions of the carrier strips. Thus, Busler does not disclose or suggest a locking member attachment coupled to the end portion of the carrier strip and a locked member attachment coupled to the end portion of another carrier strip. Therefore, even if combined, the references do not disclose or suggest the claimed invention.

Furthermore, there is no suggestion or motivation for one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to combine Busler with Hikita to arrive at the claimed invention.

Hikita specifically discloses that component clusters replace the conventional tape or tape member (col. 1, lines 13–57; Figs 10A). Busler discloses a carrier strip for carrying elements (col. 2, lines 25–30), but does not disclose or suggest that the carrier strip is a carrier tape or tape member.

Since Hikita is using a component cluster rather than a conventional tape, there is no motivation or need to look at the carrier strip elements in Busler. One skilled in the art would not have combined these references at the relevant time to arrive at the claimed invention. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of the claims based upon the combination of references is respectfully requested.

Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Engl (DE 3311634) in view of Busler. For at least the following reasons, the Examiner's rejection is respectfully traversed.

None of the references disclose or suggest "the first connecting portion of the second tape member and the second connecting portion of the first tape member are formed by coupling a locking member attachment and a locked member attachment respectively at the end portions of the tape members" as recited in claim 3.

Engl discloses an additional strip part 8 that joins two belt ends 9, 10 together. Engl does not disclose or suggest a first connecting portion that is formed by coupling a member attachment at the end portion of the belt. Engl also does not disclose or suggest a second connecting portion that is formed by coupling a member attachment at the end portion of the belt.

Busler does not overcome the deficiencies of the Engl reference. Although Busler discloses that one end of the carrier strip 41 has a snap member 42 and the other end of the carrier strip includes a receptacle 44 (col. 2, lines 30-32), Busler does not disclose or suggest that the snap member 42 and the receptacle 44 are coupled to the end portions of the carrier strips. Thus, Busler does not disclose or suggest a locking member attachment coupled to the end portion of the carrier strip and a locked member attachment coupled to the end portion of another carrier

strip. Therefore, even if combined, the references do not disclose or suggest the claimed invention.

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and notice to that effect is hereby requested. If it is determined that the application is not in a condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to initiate a telephone interview with the undersigned attorney to expedite prosecution of the present application.

If there are any additional fees resulting from this communication, please charge same to our Deposit Account No. 16-0820, our Order No. 36261.

Respectfully submitted,
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